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Mixed reaction over declaration

Both sides of political divide express strong opinions on the matter

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PETALING JAYA: Leaders from both sides of the country's political divide issued a mix of strong reactions, a day after former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and a number of other political and civil society leaders signed a citizens' declaration urging Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to resign.

Those against the declaration slammed Dr Mahathir and criticised the campaign as being disrespectful towards the country's democratic system in which government is chosen through elections. Those who support it said that it is well within their rights to speak up.

The following are some of their comments.

What those against the declaration said:

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi

"It is obvious that the actions by some former leaders to try and topple the nation's leader is because of their personal agendas. Umno and Barisan Nasional component party members will reject their actions. The unity among our members remains strong."

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein

"At a time when our leaders are

going all out to ensure that the economy is growing and public security is safeguarded, Dr Mahathir and his associates as well as the opposition are caught up in their agenda to topple the Prime Minister. Stability is being eroded due to their politics of hate."

MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai

"The Prime Minister was legitimately elected and people should not resort to undemocratic means to topple him.

"MCA's stance remains clear. We fully support Najib's leadership."

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong

"The group comprising seasoned politicians and activists should demonstrate a good example to the public by adhering to the existing mechanism in changing the prime minister and government through lawful and democratic process."

Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin

"If they are so unhappy, we suggest that they merge in one official political alliance and face the Barisan at the next election."

Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil

"Conspiring with the opposition to topple Najib shows that Dr

Mahathir is willing to discard the very principles he upheld when he led Umno."

Johor Umno chief Datuk Mohamed Khaled Nordin

"Umno must face the fact that the declaration could harm the party as well as Barisan in the next general election. With many prominent Malays like the former attorney-general and the former deputy Inspector-General of Police also supporting and signing the declaration, I am worried what this might translate to at the next general election."

Sabah Umno chief Datuk Seri Musa Aman

"Sabah Umno will not lose focus or run away from its priority of making the people's interest come first in every development and government agenda. We will continue to urge people to stand together with the government."

MIC Youth chief C. Sivaraajh

"The principle here is simply one of survival for Dr Mahathir and his former political foes - the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang

"There are declarations we can follow, and there are declarations we cannot follow. We want a peace-

ful approach and we do not want an Arab Spring that has not borne fruit until today."

What those who support the declaration said:

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal

"Calling for leaders to step down is not new as there were calls for Dr Mahathir and Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to step aside in the past. We must deal with issues transparently. To ask about issues concerning public interest is not being disloyal. We want the party to remain strong."

Former Kedah menteri besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir

"The statement that the rakyat should wait until the 14th general election to change the prime minister is extremely damaging to Barisan's interests. If Najib still leads Barisan during the 14th general election, Barisan will pay the price. The anger of the rakyat can no longer be held at bay."

PKR vice-president Tian Chua

"We are not challenging the legitimacy of Barisan's mandate, so there is no issue about how we are supposedly trying to topple the Government without going through elections."

DAP national vice-chairman Teresa Kok

"There is nothing undemocratic about voicing our dissatisfaction on 1Malaysia Development Berhad and the abuse of power and government institutions."

Former PAS information chief Datuk Mahfuz Omar

"I believe that many Malaysians, especially among the younger generation will support the declaration. They can clearly see that Najib has failed to manage our country well, and they want a more transparent government."

Bersih 2.0 chairman Maria Chin Abdullah

"The strength of the declaration is in its demand for institutional reforms because this is the only way to ensure that the interests and rights of all will be protected. We have good reason to call for Najib's resignation because he had not been able to bring these reforms."

Centre to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) executive director Cynthia Gabriel

"The declaration speaks of the dire straits in our country and calls for structural changes to bodies such as the police and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission. This is not just about calling on Najib to resign."